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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000009

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SUBJECT: (C) KRG-E INTERIOR MINISTER OFFERS POLICE HELP

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard K. Bell, Regional Coordinator, Exec,
Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (U) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: In a January 19 meeting with Regional Coordinator (RC), Karim Sinjari, Minister of Interior for the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil (KRG-E), said he agreed with the USG decision to make 2006 "the year of the police." He said Iraq's police force suffered from poor education, including many Saddam-era officers who are corrupt, illiterate and incompetent. Other serious problems are the police special forces who are carrying out tasks best left to the army and the fact that the primary loyalty of many new recruits is to their political party. Among the solutions Sinjari proposed were a more extensive initial training program that mixed periods of academic study with temporary assignments to police units and his offer to help train police recruits at Erbil's police academy. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

(C) CORRUPTION, INCOMPETENCE, DISLOYALTY AFFLICT POLICE

¶2. (C) Karim Sinjari agreed with Ambassador Khalilzad's statement that 2006 should be "the year of the police." Concerning the challenges facing Iraq's police, he said:

-- Earlier Coalition attempts to rebuild Iraq's police force were rushed and ineffective.

-- All of Iraq's police fall under the deputy Minister of Interior for Police, whose office is not capable of shouldering that responsibility.

-- Many of Iraq's police are corrupt, illiterate and incapable of doing their jobs effectively, a reflection of the poor esteem and pay of police under the previous regime. Some officers were try to hide their illiteracy but would give themselves away by trying to read documents upside down. The old, corrupt officers need to be retired before they corrupt the new ones.

-- The police need higher salaries to bring the risks they run and their compensation into better balance.

-- The police must stop carrying out military operations and the army must leave law and order to the police. This will require more and better trained police and an end to the police special forces.

-- The police special forces are carrying out combat operations best left to the army and are not under national control. The police need to be trained to be loyal to Iraq, not to a political party.

(C) SINJARI: WE'RE READY TO HELP IRAQ'S POLICE IN ANY WAY

13. (C) Regarding steps that should be taken and that the KRG-E Ministry of Interior is taking to address the deficits in police, Sinjari said:

-- Police recruits should, as far as possible, be college graduates and they should be trained in Iraq; only for specialist training should they be sent abroad. Police force trainees should receive an initial six weeks of training, then work in the police force for one month followed by another six weeks of general training followed by assignment to a specific unit and the training required for that unit.

-- Sinjari has invited Iraq's senior Ministry of Interior personnel to Erbil for a conference to draft a police strategic plan for presentation to the government and nationwide implementation. (NOTE: Sinjari said that he would be staying on for at least another year or so as KRG-E's Minister of Interior. END NOTE.)

-- The KRG-E Ministry of Interior is ready to provide anything the other police units of Iraq need, including training at the KRG-E's police academy.

-- "We put a lot of effort into our police academy, which is the best in Iraq." Trainees with only a high school education are enrolled for three years of training while college graduates receive seven months. The Erbil police academy has trained some of Kirkuk's police and offered to train some of Mosul's police. The academy started training female officers three years ago, and the numbers keep increasing as society comes to see police work as a respectable profession for women. The most recent class has 28 female officers.

-- The Kirkuk police force has improved. The Mosul police force

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has improved even more but started from a lower level of ability.

(U) COMMENT

14. (C) We do not know where Sinjari's offers stand in Baghdad, but consider both to be worth exploring (i.e., hosting a conference to work out a plan for strengthening Iraq's police, and training at the KRG-E police academy).

BELL